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State of Michigan Honors Steve Rellinger of Central Michigan University for Outstanding Service to Veterans

LANSING, MI—On Tuesday, April 24, 2012, the State of Michigan Veterans' Services Division honored Steve Rellinger, Director of the Veterans' Resource Center at Central Michigan University (CMU), for his outstanding service to veterans as they transition from military service to education and employment.

"Michigan's Veterans' Services Division is in the business of helping our returning heroes find jobs," said Retired Major General Robert Smith, Director of the Veterans' Services Division for the State of Michigan. "When someone makes it their mission to help veterans, we take notice. The State of Michigan owes Steve Rellinger a debt of gratitude for the wise counsel and unwavering support he offers the veterans who come to CMU to get an education and establish a career."

Rellinger serves as Director of the Veterans' Resource Center at CMU. The Center was established to help veterans make the most of the multitude of educational opportunities CMU offers. Rellinger and his VRC staff:

- Help veterans obtain the educational benefits they've earned through military service, including benefits for eligible spouses and dependents of veterans;
- Support veterans in their transition from active duty to education at any of CMU's locations or online;
- Assist veterans in building strong academic and social networks.

Rellinger was nominated for the award by several Michigan Veterans' Employment Specialists whose job it is to help returning veterans find work, or access educational and training opportunities for in-demand careers.

Rellinger served in the United States Navy from 1976 to 1982, and was on active duty from 1976 to 1980. He resides in Lake Isabella, Michigan.

"I am humbled by this award," said Rellinger. "It is an absolute honor to help my fellow veterans."

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Last November, in his Special Message on Talent Development, Governor Rick Snyder highlighted the unique skills veterans bring to the job, including leadership and a strong work ethic tested under extreme circumstances. He also cited their real-world work experience and transferrable technical expertise – qualities Michigan employers can tap to benefit their own businesses and help grow the Michigan economy. He challenged Michigan businesses to consider veterans when making hiring decisions, and to help the veterans they employ more fully access their benefits.

In Michigan, the Veterans Services Division, part of the state's Workforce Development Agency (WDA), is charged with helping Michigan veterans and their eligible spouses find employment or start a business. A staff of 60 Veterans' Employment Specialists work on site at 85 Michigan Works! Agency offices around the state, meeting vets where they live to help them find jobs or get the training they'll need to get a job.

Michigan veterans are encouraged to visit their local Michigan Works! Agency where Veterans' Employment Specialists offer a variety of services to both veterans and employers, including:

- Evaluating veterans' skills and developing an effective job search plan, with help in resume writing and interviewing skills.
- Making direct connections between veterans and local employers with jobs to fill.
- Assisting veterans to identify and access training and educational opportunities to improve their employability.
- Educating employers on the benefits of hiring veterans, and helping them find skilled veterans for available positions.
- Helping returning veterans access all federal, state and local resources available to help them with the transition from military service to employment.

In 2010, Michigan's Veterans Services Division staff helped find work for more than 7,700 Michigan veterans, making Michigan 8th in the nation for the number of vets helped to find employment.

"Hundreds of Michigan military personnel serve our country honorably only to return home and struggle to find a job and support their families," said General Smith.

"Employers are recognizing the many talents these men and women have gained through their service. We encourage all Michigan employers who have thrived in this time of conflict to give our returning vets a shot at a good job and a new start."

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